



DIVISION OF
STUDENT AFFAIRS
CONFERENCES & VISITOR SERVICES

Hartwick Building - Box 10
4321 Hartwick Road, Suite 500
College Park, Maryland 20742
301.314.7884 TEL 301.314.6693 FAX
www.cvs.umd.edu

CONTACT:

Joseph E. Criscuoli '82
Marketing, Sales, Publications & Outreach Coordinator
301.314.7884
joecrisc@umd.edu

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE
BEING NAMED BEST VENUE FOR UNIQUE OR LOCALLY SOURCED CATERING
AND BEST VENUE FOR YOUTH/SPORTS GROUPS IN THE
2017 UNIQUE VENUES BEST OF AWARDS**

*Voted on by 55,000+ meeting and event planners across the U.S. and Canada,
It's the only award of its kind in the niche industry*

COLLEGE PARK, MD (December 12, 2017) – Unique Venues has announced the winners of its 2017 Best Of Awards, recognizing the standout campuses, conference and business centers, sports arenas, historical and cultural venues, camps and retreat centers, and other special event venues that wowed guests this year. More than 55,000 planners that regularly use Unique Venues' services to connect to non-traditional spaces voted in 22 total categories.

University of Maryland, College Park in College Park, MD is proud to announce they took home the special Best of Award for Best Venue for Unique or Locally Sourced Catering. At the University of Maryland, College Park, traditional cafeteria fare just won't do. Instead the in-house culinary team creates fresh, unique dishes with restaurant caliber. "New guests are frequently surprised at the cuisine and service offered on our campus because they don't expect university food service to operate at this level," says W. Bartram Hipple, Assistant Director for Communications with the Department of Dining Services at the university. Many of the ingredients come from Terp Farm, an organic farm 15 miles off campus that works in conjunction with the College of Agriculture and Dining Services. Students log field trips, workdays, and internships, and Terp Farm provides produce to University of Maryland Catering, restaurants, and occasionally to dining halls. "In addition, catering chefs maintain two herb gardens at the front of the Adele H. Stamp Student Union and harvest many of the herbs they use right at the moment they are needed," adds Hipple who says that the updated catering options were in response to more clients specifying sustainability as an important aspect of their event. "They are looking for locally sourced foods, recyclable or compostable supplies, and menus that feature a local theme, and we are proud to serve the university community in this way."

The University of Maryland, College Park is doubly proud to announce their second 2017 Best of Award: for Best Venue for Youth/Sports Groups. For the second consecutive year, the University of Maryland, College Park took home the award in this category. The campus offers unparalleled

options for youth groups, including a suburban location near the nation's capital with two-layer security and 8,000 beds plus two dining halls where younger attendees can convene together. "Each summer, sports camps run by Big Ten Conference coaches combine with college immersion, special studies, and STEAM programs to create a thriving campus," says Joseph E. Criscuoli, Marketing, Sales, Publications & Outreach Coordinator for the Conferences & Visitor Services department at the university. One of the most notable is the Maryland Field Hockey Camp held at UMCP's state-of-the-art field hockey turf facility since 1995 with instruction from current and former National & Olympic team members. "Our ropes challenge course, rock climbing wall, ice cream socials from the Maryland Dairy, and TerpZone facility are 'must-do' add-ons for any youth program," adds Criscuoli. UMCP can also provide in-house motor coach charters that make ground transportation to nearby Annapolis, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. a breeze for additional educational components.

With the announcement of these two awards, the Conferences & Visitor Services department has now brought five Best Of Awards to the University of Maryland, College Park. In 2015, the "Most Easily Accessible Venue" award was received, followed by the "Best Suburban/Rural Venue" and "Best Venue for Youth/Sports Groups" in 2016.

All winners were feted at the Unique Venues Annual Member Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and each winner is also be featured in a special edition of *Unique Venues* magazine, hitting newsstands today.

About Unique Venues

Unique Venues has been the go-to source for non-conventional meeting and event venues, and the planners looking for them, for the past 30 years. The marketing and membership company has grown to be the largest online database in the U.S. and Canada with member venues including colleges and universities, historical and cultural venues, arenas and stadiums, camps and retreat centers, conferences and business centers and other special event venues. Services include free RFP submissions, assisted searches and a quarterly magazine distribution that help planners find the perfect fit every time.

About University of Maryland, College Park

The University of Maryland, College Park is the state's flagship university and one of the nation's preeminent public research universities. A global leader in research, entrepreneurship and innovation, the university is home to more than 38,000 students, 9,000 faculty and staff, and 250 academic programs. Its faculty includes two Nobel laureates, three Pulitzer Prize winners, 60 members of the national academies and scores of Fulbright scholars. The institution has a \$1.9 billion operating budget and secures \$560 million annually in external research funding. For more information about the University of Maryland, College Park, visit www.umd.edu.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UNIQUE VENUES,
PLEASE CALL 970.926.7676**



- 2015 -

Most Easily Accessible Venue

- 2016 -

**Best Venue for Youth/Sports Camps
Best Suburban/Rural Venue**

- 2017 -

**Best Venue for Youth/Sports Camps
Best Venue for Unique or Locally-Sourced Catering**

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www.cvs.umd.edu conferences@umd.edu
301.314.7884